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Marshall Space Flight Center



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An Inexpensive Vehicle Speed Detector

A new inexpensive and easy-to-operate speed detector has been developed for law enforcement agencies. Potentially the detector could be manufactured for less than \$200 a unit and would have a very low maintenance cost.

The device is a low-power minicomputer that can plug into an automobile cigarette lighter. It is used to measure the time it takes an observed car to travel a premeasured distance and provides an immediate readout of the speed. The premeasured distance can be between natural markers (e.g., from a crossroad to a bridge) or emplaced markers such as two spots of paint.

The control and display face consists of thumb-wheel switches on which distances up to 9,999 feet can be entered, a speed readout in miles per hour, and a timing switch. To use the detector, the predetermined distance is set on the thumbwheels, and the timer switch is thrown "on" when the observed car passes the first marker. When the car passes the second marker, the timer is switched "off". The calculator measures the elapsed time by means of an internal clock and automatically divides that time into the distance to give a rapidly displayed average speed.

Because of its low cost, even small police departments could afford several of these detectors. This would allow traffic speeds to be monitored more frequently and in several locations simultaneously, a procedure that is not economically feasible with expensive systems such as radar.

Note:

Requests for further information may be directed to:
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Patent status:

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